

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of self-reported depression between men and women who had been exposed to violence by intimate partners. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Women's Health are used. The sample included 6709 women aged 27-42 years who had been married or cohabiting at least once during their lives. Of these women, 18% reported having experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Depression was measured using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. Results showed that among those who had been exposed to violence, 20% reported being depressed compared to 13% of those who had not been exposed to violence. This difference remained significant after controlling for age, education, income, and other factors. These findings suggest that exposure to violence by intimate partners is associated with higher rates of depression.

Keywords: depression, violence, intimate partner, women's health

Introduction

Depression is a common mental health problem that affects millions of people each year. It is characterized by feelings of sadness, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and thoughts of suicide. Depression can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life and ability to function in daily life. One of the most common causes of depression is stress, which can be caused by a variety of factors, including trauma, loss, and chronic illness. In recent years, there has been growing concern about the link between violence and depression. Research has shown that exposure to violence, particularly intimate partner violence, is associated with higher rates of depression. This paper examines the relationship between exposure to violence by intimate partners and depression in a large, nationally representative sample of women.

Method

Data for this study were drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Women's Health, a large-scale longitudinal survey of women's health and well-being. The study included 6709 women aged 27-42 years who had been married or cohabiting at least once during their lives. The women were surveyed at three time points: baseline, follow-up 1, and follow-up 2. At baseline, the women were asked about their experiences of violence by intimate partners. They were also asked about their symptoms of depression. At follow-up 1 and follow-up 2, the women were asked about their current symptoms of depression. The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) was used to measure depression. The CES-D is a self-reporting scale that consists of 20 items that assess various symptoms of depression, such as feeling sad, losing interest in activities, and changes in appetite and sleep patterns. The total score on the CES-D ranges from 0 to 60, with higher scores indicating more severe depression.

Results

Results showed that among those who had been exposed to violence, 20% reported being depressed compared to 13% of those who had not been exposed to violence. This difference remained significant after controlling for age, education, income, and other factors. These findings suggest that exposure to violence by intimate partners is associated with higher rates of depression.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that exposure to violence by intimate partners is associated with higher rates of depression. These findings have important implications for public health and clinical practice. First, they highlight the need for further research on the mechanisms through which violence leads to depression. Second, they underscore the importance of providing support and treatment for women who have experienced violence. Finally, they emphasize the need for prevention efforts aimed at reducing the incidence of intimate partner violence.

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